

Report Cites Flaws of Year 2000 Plan

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The Year 2000 Plan, once a widely heralded, pacesetting blueprint for guiding metropolitan Washington's explosive growth to the turn of the century, is fading fast as a workable guide.

Many of the things essential to achieving its goals have not been built or provided.

Many of the development policies that have been adopted by local governments clearly contradict its principles.

The result is the chief ingredient for a patternless sprawl that threatens to spread endlessly across the Virginia and Maryland countryside.

These are among the conclusions of a profusely illustrated, 49-page report called "The Changing Region" just published by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), the area's federally designated regional planning review agency.

When published in 1961, the Year 2000 Plan stirred national interest in the planning profession and was the subject of a major presentation at the annual convention of the American Institute of Planners.

It called for the creation of major freeway and rapid transit spokes radiating outward from Washington,

whose downtown was to become a lively and economically strong Metro center.

Intensive residential, commercial and industrial development was to be encouraged along the radial spokes.

Between the spokes were to be wedges of green space made up of parks, farms, open land and low-density residential development. Typical small-lot suburban subdivisions were to be outlawed.

"The Changing Region," which reviews the plan to date, does not recommend whether it should be resurrected and strengthened, or junked and replaced.

"We do suggest that we are running out of time (if the plan has any chance of being carried out)," Walter A. Scheiber, executive director, told COG's transportation planning board on Monday.

A summarized presentation of "The Changing Region" clearly shocked some board members.

"It's a devastating document," one member said privately later. "It raises the question of whether planning—any planning—of raw land (around the metropolitan fringes) is worth the money and effort."

One factor that has increased the difficulty of carrying out the plan is the rate of population growth

far greater than was forecast by its authors.

They foresaw a growth in the metropolitan area from 2.1 million in 1960 to about 5 million by the turn of the century.

The latest substantiated prediction foresees a year 2000 total of perhaps 7.7 million—"an additional (metropolitan) Washington of today on top of what we expected to be there (in Year 2000)," one COG planner noted.

Some of the shortcomings in carrying out the plan cited in the COG report are:

- Only about 10 per cent of the open space needed to carry out the plan has been clearly preserved.

- Sewers planned for construction between 1975 and 1985 "will encourage urban development in the wedge areas."

- Little use has been made of low-density zoning.

- Rail rapid transit has been delayed. Even the planned 98-mile Metro system will serve only areas already developed and cannot help set the pattern for development beyond the fringes.

- Radial freeway connections, such as Interstate Rte. 66 in Virginia, which were intended to draw intensive development into the transportation corridors and help keep it out of wedge areas, have not been completed.

- Additional planned high-

ways will provide access to wedge areas just as much as to development corridors.

- Federal employment centers have not been "specifically planned to encourage the development" of communities along the transportation radials, as called for in a memorandum by President Kennedy when he endorsed the plan.

By contrast, the report's summary of "significant progress" amounts to little more than a catalogue of good intentions. One of the rare bits of praise is for the preservation of stream valleys in upper Montgomery County.

Most of the discussion at the transportation planning board meeting dealt with suburban development.

But D.C. City Councilman Jerry A. Moore Jr. focused on the effect he saw for the city.

"D.C. is becoming more and more a locked-in territory . . . excluded from or exclusive in its environment, strangled in housing, employment and traffic," he asserted.

"I think your planning should include a principle by which (Washington) should be kept alive," Moore concluded.

"I think your observation is correct," responded Board Chairman Harold O. Miller, a Fairfax County Supervisor.

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